
WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee

Minutes of 13 January 2026

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee was called to order at 1 p.m. on 13 January 2026 via Webex video conferencing by Elissa Allen, chair.

Members in Attendance: Elissa Allen, Beth Ernst, Dana Hammond, Elizabeth Isidro, Jessica Parker, Brian Tripp, Luchara Wallace,

Member Absent: Lindsay Jeffers

Advisory Members Present: Jonathan Bush, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Carrie Cumming

Ex Officio: Janet Hahn

Quorum

A quorum was present with eight members present of the four necessary to establish a quorum.

Recording Notice

Chair Allen announced that the meeting was being recorded solely for the purpose of taking accurate minutes, due to the absence of a secretary. The recording will be deleted following approval of the minutes.

Agenda

[MOTION] It was moved by Tripp, seconded by Isidro, to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes

[MOTION] It was moved by Parker, seconded by Ernst, to approve the 9 December 2025 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports of Officers

Chair Allen did not present a report.

Ex Officio Hahn did not present a report.

Reports of University Representatives

Bush provided updates related to ongoing WMU Essential Studies operational work. He noted that the January meeting was intended to continue the discussion of transfer course approval processes and to begin preliminary discussion related to WMU Essential Studies Student Learning Outcome (SLO) rubric review. Bush emphasized that both topics would likely require continued discussion at future meetings.

DeChano-Cook did not present a report.

Unfinished Business

Ex Officio Hahn opened nominations for secretary. No nominations were made. The secretary position remains vacant.

New Business

Chair Allen and Bush introduced a discussion of the WMU Essential Studies transfer course approval process, with Bush outlining the current approach for reviewing transfer course equivalencies. He explained that advising offices may approve individual transfer courses for students under existing

procedures, while the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee retains responsibility for reviewing patterns of approvals and determining whether courses should be considered for broader or permanent inclusion. Committee members asked questions regarding how transfer approvals are documented, how frequently transfer decisions are brought forward for committee review, and how consistency is maintained across advising units. Additional questions were also raised about how changes to courses at sending institutions are identified and how previously approved transfer equivalencies are revisited when course content changes. Bush clarified that transfer approvals are tracked and periodically reviewed, and that courses approved for multiple students may be brought back to the WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee for consideration. He noted that coordination with Transfer Admissions is part of this process. A discussion was held regarding the balance between timely decision-making for students and the need for committee oversight. Chair Allen emphasized that the goal is to ensure transparency and consistency while avoiding unnecessary delays in student progress.

Bush introduced discussion of WMU Essential Studies Student Learning Outcome (SLO) rubrics, referencing prior assessment and review conversations. He noted that questions have emerged regarding consistency in rubric use across courses and levels, as well as clarity for faculty who teach WMU Essential Studies-designated courses. The committee asked questions about whether rubric review would involve revision of existing rubrics or clarification of expectations for their use. Additional questions focused on which committee or group would be responsible for the work, how the Course Review and Approval Committee might be involved, and how any rubric-related work would align with upcoming cyclic review activities. Bush clarified that no specific proposal or timeline was being presented at this time and that the discussion was intended to surface issues and inform future planning. It was emphasized that the importance of ensuring shared understanding of assessment expectations while also minimizing additional workload for faculty.

Announcements

None.

Adjournment

[MOTION] It was moved by Tripp, seconded by Isidro, to adjourn the meeting at 1:55 p.m. The motion carried. The next meeting will be held on 10 February 2026 via Webex.

Approval

Submitted by Elissa Allen, Chair

Minutes approved on 10 February 2026.